

Ouranology - The Doctrine of Heaven

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Introduction

Deuteronomy 10:14, "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is."

All of the heavens and heaven belong to God. The Earth belongs to God and we belong to God. The thief, Satan, tries to steal them from God and claim ownership. Yet God is the Maker and Owner of all things. Heaven is the Lord's. *Heaven* comes from the Greek word "ouranos" (oo-ran-os) thus the Doctrine of Heaven is called Ouranology.

What does heaven mean? The word *heaven* means "lofty" or "elevation." *Heaven* is used in the Bible 551 times of them, 313 times in the Old Testament and 238 times in the New Testament. Consider that hell is mention only 54 times in the Bible. The Bible speaks of Heaven over 10 times more than hell. That is where God wants us! Let us rejoice in that. Be sure you are saved from your sins so you can go there someday.

The word *heavens* (plural) appears an additional 127 times in our King James Bible. Thus, the total times mentioned are 678.

I. The Creation of the Heavens

- The heavens were made by God.

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

They did not always exist as God has. They were made. Their making marked "the beginning."

Nehemiah 9:6, "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee."

- They were made by the Son of God

Colossians 1:16, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:"

- They were made by the Holy Spirit

Job 26: 13, "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent."

- They were made by the Word of the Lord

Psalms 33:6, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."

The whole Trinity was involved in the creation of Heaven. They spoke it into existence. Man cannot speak anything into existence, but God can. That is the power of His Word. God uses His Word to do His work! We should too.

II. The Three Heavens

Because of the presence of the word *heavens*, there must be more than one. The Apostle Paul affirmed this in **2 Corinthians 12:2**, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven." Let us study these three heavens.

The First Heaven

The word *Heaven* is found seven times in the first chapter of the Bible alone. It is the seventh word into the Bible. In Genesis 1, we see that it means more than the Celestial City.

In Genesis 1:8 the word *firmament* means "expanse or sky." The first heaven then is what we call the atmosphere where we see blue skies, clouds, airplanes, and birds. This is where the air is. Twenty-one times the Bible speaks of the birds or fowls of the "air." One example is **Matthew 8:20**, "And Jesus saith unto him *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*" (See also Genesis 1:20.)

Birds and fowl are also said to occupy "heaven" twenty-one times. For example: **Psalms 104:12**, "By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches." So then the air and heaven are one and the same: The First Heaven.

This is where dew comes from. "Dew of Heaven" is mentioned nine times. One example is **Genesis 27:28**, "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:"

This is also where rain comes from. **Acts 14:17**, "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

In conclusion, the First Heaven is where the birds, clouds, airplanes, etc. are; the Earth's atmosphere.

The Second Heaven

This is the region we call outer space. It is filled with stars, planets, galaxies, black holes, and so on.

The phrase "stars of heaven" occurs eleven times in scripture. Back in the first chapter of the Bible we also see the Second Heaven made. **Genesis 1: 14-17**, "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth," This is speaking of our sun and our moon.

Many other verses could be quoted here such as:

Isaiah 13:10, "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."

Psalms 8:3, 4, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

Let us give glory to God for these first two heavens and like David, "consider" them.

1 Chronicles 16:26, "For all the gods of the people are idols: but the Lord made the heavens."

Psalms 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."

The Third Heaven

This is the current heaven where God dwells. Although this is a glorious place, this is not the New Heaven described in Revelation 21 and 22.

The third heaven is called a city. It was said of Abraham, "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." **Hebrews 11:10**. We also should be like Abraham. "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." **Hebrews 13:14**.

This city is described in **Hebrews 12:22-24**, "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

The third heaven is also called a country. "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." **Hebrews 11:16**.

The third heaven is called Paradise. Paradise refers to forests, orchards, preserves, and enclosed gardens. It comes from the Hebrew word *pardec*. Examples are found in Nehemiah 2:8, Ecclesiastes 2:5, and Song of Solomon 4:13. Whether a person

likes the city, country, forests, orchards, preserves, or gardens, heaven will be a paradise! It will be bliss.

There may be golden streets and pearly gates in this third heaven, but we are not told that. That is the future heaven or New Heaven. It is a paradise though. Paradise is a New Testament word (Greek: *Paradeisos*) found in the following three texts:

- **Luke 23:43**, "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
- **2 Corinthians 12:4**, "How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."
- **Revelation 2:7**, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Because of the Tree of Life being present there, some have called the original Garden of Eden Paradise, though the Bible does not state this.

Paul's Witness of the Third Heaven

Paul was one human who went there and came back. He did not reveal one single thing he saw. He only commented on what he heard. He called the words he heard unspeakable. He considered these words so sacred that they could not be spoken in this world. May God help us to be more in awe of what we hear from God than what we see with our eyes.

2 Corinthians 12:2-4. "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

Paul could not repeat the words he heard while in Paradise. He probably referred to this experience when he quoted the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 64:4) in **1 Corinthians 2:9**, saying, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Isaiah's Witness of the Third Heaven

Isaiah was another man who saw a glimpse of Heaven. The record is in **Isaiah 6:1-7**, "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

From this text we learn that in the Third Heaven:

- The Lord is sitting upon a throne
- The Lord is wearing a robe with a very long train (hem).
- There is a temple in Heaven where He sits. Other scriptures that speak of this temple are Revelation 3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17. (Contrast this with the New Heaven of the future: **Revelation 21:22** "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.")
- Six winged seraphims ceaselessly fly above the throne of God and cry one to another announcing the holiness of the Lord of Hosts.
- There is an altar of live coals.

When Isaiah saw the Lord, he felt condemned, unclean, and undone. What particularly troubled him were his unclean lips and the unclean lips of the people of the world. Do our words bother us?

John's Witness of the Third Heaven

It pays to be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day – Sunday! The entire book of Revelation was given to John on that day (Revelation 1:10). The greatest revelations of our lives usually come to us when we hear "what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). This usually takes place on Sundays (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2).

In this revelation we learn more of the Third Heaven. All of the following observations are from the book of Revelation unless noted:

- There is a door in Heaven (4:1). This is a type of the rapture. The door is opened to all who hear the first audible voice and the sound of the trumpet. Trumpets are mentioned several times as being in Heaven and used by angels. God is also said to have a trumpet (1 Thessalonians 4:16). The only other instrument said to be in Heaven is the harp (5:8; 14:2; 15:2).

- There is a throne set in Heaven. It is the same one Isaiah saw (Isaiah 4:2).
- God who sits on the throne is described as being like jasper (clear crystal) and a sardine stone (dark red). This was the best way John could describe God's glory (4:3).
- There is a rainbow about the throne (4:3). Our rainbows on earth are made of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. This one appears as an emerald, which is green. Green represents life.
- Around God's throne are twenty-four seats. There are twenty-four elders, clothed in white raiment, sitting on the seats. They wear crowns of gold (4:4).
- Lightning, thunder, and voices proceed from the throne of God (4:5).
- There are 7 lamps of fire burning before God's throne (4:5). These are the 7 Spirits of God (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). Isaiah 11:2 reveals these 7 Spirits to us:
 - The Spirit of the Lord
 - The Spirit of Wisdom
 - The Spirit of Understanding
 - The Spirit of Counsel
 - The Spirit of Might
 - The Spirit of Knowledge
 - The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord
- There is a sea of glass, like crystal, before the throne (4:6).
- Four beasts, like the seraphim Isaiah saw, are seen (4:6-8). They continually announce the holiness of God "who was, and is, and is to come." (Look at Isaiah 6:1-3.) These beasts also give glory, honor, and thanks to God at times. When they do, the twenty-four elders fall down before God on His throne and worship Him, casting their crowns before Him. They exalt the Lord who created all things for His pleasure. There is worship in the Third Heaven (4:9-11)! Things should be done in earth as they are in Heaven. We should worship God and fall down before Him. We must study Heaven to know what we should be doing on earth (Luke 11:2).
- There is a seven-sealed scroll in heaven, waiting to be opened. Not one person in Heaven is worthy to open this book (scroll) or even look at it. Jesus alone is worthy and will open it in the future (5:1-7). Jesus is described as a Lion who will conquer Satan and evil. He is also described as a Lamb slain to satisfy all of the will of God. This Lamb has seven horns. These represent the power He has to execute all of the will of God. The seven eyes represent Jesus' wisdom to understand all of the will of God. He has been given the Holy Spirit without measure. He is the only one who ever approaches the throne in Heaven and takes the book.
- There is universal worship of God and the Lamb, Jesus Christ, in Heaven. Jesus is described as a "Lamb" with a capital "L" on thirty different occasions in the New Testament. Two of them refer to Him while on earth (John 1:29, 36). The other twenty-eight references refer to Him in Heaven. Thank God when we see Christ in Heaven we will meet Him as a Lamb! This shows that meekness always wins in the end.
- The beasts, the elders, all angels, and all people worship God (5: 8, 11-14).
- There are harps in heaven (5:8).
- There are golden vials full of odors (perfume) which are the prayers of the saints (5:9).
- There is singing in Heaven. The theme is redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ (5:9).
- The gospel has worked on earth and there are people out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation. Heaven is full of people who will rule and reign with Christ; a people place (5:9, 10)!
- There is a loud voice of worship in Heaven (5:11, 12). John numbers the angels present as 100 million ("*ten thousand times ten thousand*") and thousands of thousands. Paul used the word "innumerable" to describe the angels he saw (Heb. 12:22).
- All of the creatures of God's creation are heard worshiping God in Heaven (5:13). Everyone in Heaven and out of Heaven will worship God some day. (Compare the wording of this verse with Philippians 2:10, 11.) How and when this will happen we do not know. It may happen often.
- The martyrs will be in Heaven (6:9-11). They are so close to God they are described as being under the altar! Do not feel sorry for martyrs. They will be close to God forever. They are clothed in white robes.
- There are still questions in Heaven (6:10).
- There is rest in Heaven (6:11).
- In the future, saints saved out of the Tribulation period will join those already there in worship (7:9-15). This is very similar to what was described in chapter 5. This is a great crowd which no man can number. They also cry out with a loud voice. The phrase "loud voice" is found 12 times in the book of Revelation. Eight of these refer to events in Heaven. Heaven is a loud place. These Tribulation converts are also clothed in white robes. They have palms in their hands. A palm is a token of victory and peace.
- There is no hunger in the Third Heaven (7:16).
- There is no thirst in the Third Heaven (7:16).
- There is no oppressive heat or sunlight in the Third Heaven (7:16).
- Jesus will feed us, give us water, and banish our sorrows (7:17).
- As noisy and loud as Heaven is, there will be one space of eerie silence lasting 30 minutes (8:1). Millions of angels and millions of people will keep silent for a half an hour as God's wrath towards those that are on earth rises and seven angels are given seven trumpets to blow, announcing the fury of God (8:1-2).

- There is an altar in the Third Heaven. As the Holy Golden Altar of Incense in the tabernacle of the Old Testament was the closest piece of furniture to the Holy of Holies, so this altar is right in front of God. True prayer is about as close as we can get to God! (Compare Exodus 30: 6.) Spend much time in prayer.
- There is a golden censer in the Third Heaven (8:3-4). With the censer an angel offers up much incense with the prayers of the saints. It ascends up before God. (See Psalm 141:2, Leviticus 16:12, 13.)
- The angel will fill the censer with fire from the altar and cast it out on earth (8:5).
- An angel will fly through the midst of Heaven pronouncing the woes on earth (8:13).
- A star will fall from heaven to the earth. This star is an angel. (Compare 1:20.) He will have the key to the bottomless pit (Chapter 9).
- Another mighty angel will come down to earth from the Third Heaven having a little book. John is given the book and must eat it. It is sweet in his mouth and bitter in his stomach preparing him to prophesy again (Chapter 10). Bitter words are to come against the earth.
- We will see the two witnesses who have prophesied on the earth for 3 ½ years and have been slain, resurrected, and have been raptured up to the third heaven. (Chapter 11:1-12).
- Another session of worship before the Lord in Heaven is triggered by the sounding of a seventh angel (11:15-17).
- The Temple of God is opened in Heaven (11:19). The Ark of the Testament is seen in Heaven. This is unique to Heaven dwellers. Earth dwellers could not look at the Ark (it had to be covered by a veil, badger's skins, and a cloth wholly of blue before transporting). (See Numbers 4:4-6.) It was always in the Holiest of Holy places where only the high priest went once a year to meet God. It was hidden from all others by a thick veil. That veil was ripped in two from the top to the bottom (Matthew 27:51) thus signifying that access to God is given to all through Christ and His blood.
- Unusual things in the Third Heaven are described in Chapter 12: Two wonders and a war!
 - First wonder in Heaven: Israel (12:1-2). Compare Genesis 37:9-11 and Romans 9:27, 11:26.
 - Second wonder in Heaven: Satan and demonic activity! Yes, in the Third Heaven (12:3-4). This is symbolic of Satan's long war against Israel because of the child that Israel was used to bring into the world – Jesus Christ. About on third of the stars (angels) are cast out of heaven to the earth.
 - The war in Heaven. Michael and his angels (probably 2/3 of all angels created) against the Devil and his angels (devils, demons, probably 1/3 of all angels created) fight with each other. This will probably be the most violent war ever. Think of how powerful the angels are described and how many there are. Now think of how violent demons can be and how they are now fighting the greatest turf war ever. Every devil from earth will be summoned to the Third Heaven for this battle. Satan and his angels will lose and be cast out once and for all (12:7-9, 12-17). Satan will fall to earth, finally, in great wrath.
 - The witness in Heaven: Everything is all right in Heaven from now on (12:10, 11). Satan had been in Heaven for thousands of years accusing us before God for our sins. Thank God for our advocate Jesus Christ the Righteous! (See 1 John 2:1,2.) We overcome the Devil by having a testimony of faith in Christ and by the power of our Lord's blood.
- 144,000 stand with Jesus Christ, the Lamb, on Mount Zion in Heaven. The heavenly Jerusalem is like earthly Jerusalem in the sense that both have a Mount Zion. Mount Zion is a hill in southern Jerusalem (14:1-5).

These 144,000 were seen previously on earth (7:1-8). Now, over 3 ½ years later, they are in heaven. They now form another group that is close to Jesus in Heaven. Why?

- They belong to God. They have the Father's name in their foreheads (14:1).
- They were never defiled with women. They have never committed fornication or adultery (14:4).
- They are virgins. They are so committed to Christ that they never got married (Compare 1 Corinthians 7:4, 25-26, 32, 34). The single, spiritual life is honored in this group (14:4).
- They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. They are not only believers, but followers (14:4).
- They are the redeemed from the earth and from among men (14:3, 4).
- They are the first fruits of the Tribulation period unto God and the Lamb. This shows the pre-Tribulation rapture of all other saints (14:4).
- There is no guile found in their mouths (14:5). Guile means "trickery, a decoy, deceit, to trap". See 1 Peter 2:22.
- They are without fault before the throne of God. This means they are unblameable. They have an exemplary testimony. These are the type of people that will be near the throne in the Third Heaven (14:5).
- These 144,000 form a powerful choir. The choir sounds like the sound of many waters. Like standing next to Niagara Falls. They are accompanied by harpists. Their voices combine to sounds like a great thunder (14:2)

They sing a new song that no one else in Heaven will be able to learn (14:3). All things are not equal in Heaven. Those who live for God on this earth have special blessings. (There are some secrets in Heaven between God and His people. Compare 2:17.)

This is the second new song in the Third Heaven (5:9).

- Another angel flies from the middle of Heaven with the everlasting gospel to preach to them on the earth (14:6-7). God still cares for the earth inhabitants. The saints are in Heaven. Those saved out of the Tribulation are now in Heaven. The 144,000 are now in Heaven. Yet God still cares for the souls on earth. A new method to reach them is sent – an angel! How could any on earth resist that? Yet some do. Everybody hears the gospel!

His message "is fear God and worship God." There is no confusion anymore as to God's identity (study 10:7 – no more mystery.) The whole world knows His name is Jesus. He is the Creator (Colossians 1:16).

- Another angel follows this angel with a message of condemnation for Babylon because of their evil world system that has caused people to turn from God (14:8). Babylon represents the world's system of religious, commercial, and political oneness that rejects God and exalts man. Love for the world is spiritual fornication. Compare James 4:4.
- A third angel leaves the Third Heaven with a message of damnation to all who receive the mark of the beast (14:9-11). They will be tormented in fire and brimstone forever. They have been warned!
- A voice is heard in the third heaven saying that, from this point on, those on earth who die in the Lord are blessed (14:13). Death will deliver them from the great Tribulation. This is a good thing, seeing that this time will be the most horrific time in history (Matthew 24:21). This verse also indicates that heaven will be a place of reward and rest.
- A white cloud is seen in Heaven. Jesus sits on it with a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand (14:14).
- An angel comes out of the Temple and, with a loud voice, encourages Jesus to thrust in His sharp sickle and reap the harvest from the earth. This is the gathering of the just to Christ in heaven (14:15, 16).
- An angel with a sharp sickle comes out of the temple (14:17).
- A third angel comes from the altar and cries to the angel with the sickle. He asks the second angel to gather the unjust to the winepresses of the wrath of God. Jesus only gathers the righteous. An angel gathers the ungodly (14:18-20). The Lord uses 6 angels to do His work in this chapter.
- Now in chapters 15-16 we see 7 more angels doing the Lord's work. They have the 7 vials full of 7 plagues that will be poured out on earth (15:1). These plagues are the wrath of God.
- Another new group is seen in heaven. These are they who overcame the Beast during the last half of the Tribulation. God is still saving souls! They stand before God on a sea of glass mingled with fire (15:2).
- A third song is heard (15:3, 4). It is a song that originated with Moses and the Lamb, Jesus Christ. Maybe some songs written by other humans will be sung in heaven, we cannot tell.
- Heaven's Temple is opened, and 7 angels come out of it. These angels are dressed in white and gold. One of the 4 beasts gives out 7 vials of the wrath of God to the angels (15:5-7).
- The Temple in Heaven becomes so filled with the glory of God (in the form of smoke) that no man in Heaven will be able to enter it until the 7 plagues are fulfilled (15:8). Compare 2 Chronicles 5:12-14.
- A voice in the Temple is heard instructing the 7 angels to go pour out the wrath of God on earth (16:1).
- After the third vial is poured out, another voice out of the altar is heard saying God's judgments are true and righteous (16:7).
- After the seventh vial, a great voice comes from the throne in the Temple saying, "It is done." (16:17).
- Another angel leaves Heaven having great power. He is so glorious he lights the whole earth. He pronounces judgment on Babylon (the one-world commercial, religious, and political system of the anti-Christ). All devils have been cast out of Heaven and now inhabit the earth. It becomes more foul, unclean, and hateful than ever before (18:1-3).
- Another voice comes out of heaven to believers yet on earth. Its message is complete separation from the world to avoid being hurt by its plagues (18:4).
- There is a celebration in the Third Heaven. A great voice of many people proclaims "Alleluia" (19:1-6). There are many people in heaven! God has delivered His people, judged the great whore (One-World Babylon), and avenged the blood of the martyrs. God will have His way and the last word. The all powerful God will reign.

This text inspired the writing of the "Hallelujah Chorus" by George Frederick Handel. It was considered the first song to prompt a standing ovation. As glorious as we have heard this performed, can you imagine what the chorus in Heaven will sound like?

- The Marriage of the Lamb (19:7-9). Christ is the groom. All of the saved make up His bride. The espousal stage of marriage is over (2 Corinthians 11:2; Romans 7:4). There is no longer a physical separation, as in betrothal marriages in the Middle East. We are now physically together forever, thus is John 14:2, 3 fulfilled. (Study the parable of the Great Supper in Luke 14:16-24, or the parable of the King's Son in Matthew 22:1-14 for similarities.)
- Those in Heaven will not be allowed to worship angels or men (19:10). Compare 22:8, 9. They are allowed to worship only God.
- The Heaven will open as Jesus, on a white horse, and His armies descend to the earth for the great battle (19:11-16).

Christ is described as Faithful and True, The Word of God, THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. He judges and makes war with those on earth. His eyes are as a flame of fire (1:14). On His head are many crowns. "Crown Him with many crowns..." the songwriter wrote, inspired by this text.

Jesus will have a name that no one knows but Himself. There are some secret things in Heaven.

His vesture is dipped in blood. Some believe this is His own blood. They have a point. Who else's blood would be in Heaven? See Hebrews 12:23, 24.

He will leave Heaven with a sharp sword and an iron rod (2:27; 12:5). In the fierceness and wrath of God, Jesus will trample the enemies of God under His feet.

Will we be in Jesus' army? It seems to depend on our faithfulness (Matthew 25:21, 23; Luke 19:17-19) or our suffering for Christ (2 Timothy 2:12). Notice how those who have suffered are given positions of judgment and are allowed to reign with

Christ during the millennium on earth (20:4-6).

- Another angel comes down from Heaven having the key to the Bottomless Pit (20:1-3). He lays hold on Satan, binds him with a great chain, and casts him into the Bottomless Pit. Satan stays there for 1,000 years. This seems to be the last sight that originates in the Third Heaven.

The rest of John's vision in Revelation 20:4-10 takes place on earth, until 20:11-15. These verses describe the Great White Throne Judgment of sinners before God. This event doesn't seem to take place in either heaven or earth (read carefully 20:11). This seems to be when 21:1 takes place.

The Great White Throne Judgment will be such a sobering, horrific sight that the earth and Heaven "fled away" (20:11). This phrase means "to seek safety by flight, to escape safely out of danger, to flee something abhorrent, to vanish". This will probably be the end of the Third Heaven.

III. The New Heaven and the New Jerusalem

2 Peter 3:9-13 *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

The three heavens are dissolved and melted with a fervent heat and a great noise. This is in fulfillment of the prophecies of Isaiah:

Isaiah 65:17 *"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."*

Isaiah 66:22 *"For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain."*

What glorious promises. Even though the current Third Heaven would be glorious to go to (Philippians 1:21, 23), it has been contaminated by the devil and demons (Revelation 12:7-10) and God has to humble Himself just to look upon it (Psalm 113:6). He does not consider it clean (Job 15:15). Now go back and read what Peter and Isaiah just promised about the New Heaven.

Let us now return to Revelation 21 and 22 to learn what the New Heaven and the New Jerusalem will be like.

The New Heaven

- There will be no more sea (21:1). There will be a fountain of water (21:6) and a river of water (22:1), but no sea.
- The New Jerusalem, a city prepared by Christ for His bride (John 14:2), will be seen coming down from the New Heaven to the New Earth. This city is prefixed by the word "holy" three times (21:2, 21:10, 22:8).
- This thrice-holy city will be inhabited by God Himself (21:3). This is announced by a great voice from Heaven. The Tabernacle of God is God Himself. As glorious as the description of the New Heaven will get, nothing is greater than the fact that God will dwell with men. This will be as real as when God used to walk with Adam and Eve, only here there will be no night (21:25).
- God will wipe away all tears from our eyes (21:4). Never will a person cry. No one will ever die. The saved are immortal (1 Corinthians 15:54). Sorrow will be banished. Never will one feel sorrow, guilt, shame, embarrassment, or remorse. All tears of the past will be wiped away and never will one cry in the future. Only humans are created with lacrymal glands that can be stimulated by emotions to produce tears. These will not be needed in the New Heaven. There will be no crying. There will be no more pain. This is unimaginable, no pain of any kind! The former things are passed away and will not be remembered (Isaiah 65:17). All of this was prophesied in Isaiah 25:8.
- The Lord on His throne declares that He will make all things new! His words, as always, are true and faithful (21:5).
- In light of the description of the New Heaven in 21:1-5, verses 6-8 seem to be a gospel invitation.

Verse 6 - Jesus is the Water of Life. Any can partake freely.

Verse 7 - Those who are overcomers become His children and inherit all things (1 John 5:4, 5; Romans 8:16-17).

Verse 8 - Those who do not believe will have their part in the Lake of Fire.

The New Jerusalem

- One of the 7 angels that had poured out a vial of God's wrath on the old earth now shows John the Bride and the New Jerusalem. The Bride (21:9) is defined as "the nations of them which are saved" (21:24).

- The angel carries John away to a vantage point on a great and high mountain to watch the descension of the New Jerusalem from the New Heaven down to the new earth. It is a great and holy city (21:10).
- The city has the glory of God (21:11). That statement alone cannot be fathomed.
- The city's lighting is described as a jasper stone, clear as crystal (21:11). Pliny speaks of white jasper call Astrios which he says is "crystallo propinquans" ("near to crystal"). This stone can be found in India.

Later we read that the city has no need of a sun or moon for the glory of God lightens it and the Lamb, Jesus Christ, is the light there. See 1 John 1:5. Both spiritually and literally, God is light.

- The wall of the city is described in 21:12, 13, 17, & 18a. Do not confuse the wall *around* the city with the wall *of* the city (about 1500 miles high!). The wall around the city is great and high, 144 cubits. A cubit is approximately 18 inches: the distance from a man's elbow to the tip of his middle finger. My cubit is 19.5 inches. This wall is possibly between 216 and 240 feet high. That is 20-24 stories! We will see later that the length of each side of the wall is over 1500 miles.

The wall has twelve gates, three on the east, north, south, and west sides of the wall. Each gate has an angel posted at it. These gates will not be shut during the day. Seeing there will be no night here, they will never be shut (21:25)! How contrary to the story in Genesis 3:24, praise God.

Each gate has a name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel on it (these are listed in 7:5-8). God loves Israel and will honor her forever. Israel is God the Father's wife (Jeremiah 3:14; Isaiah 54:5, 62:1-5; Hosea 2:19, 20; Ezekiel 16:8).

The wall is like jasper, a precious stone of various colors such as purple, blue, green, brass, and sometimes crystal clear. So God looks like jasper (4:3), the lighting of the New Jerusalem is like jasper (21:11), the wall around the city is like jasper (21:18), and the first of the 12 foundations of the city is like jasper (21:19).

- Now the wall of the city is described in 21:14-16, 18b-27. This wall has twelve foundations (21:14). Each one is labeled with the name of an apostle: Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, Simon, Judas (not Judas Iscariot), and Matthias (Acts 1:26). What an eternal honor for these men who lived and died for Christ.

The city is a cube (21:15, 16). The length, height, and breadth of it are equal - 12,000 furlongs. A furlong is 1/8 of a mile. That would make the city 1500 miles in each direction. That is the distance between Buffalo, NY and Amarillo, TX. The city is so high that an airplane flying at 35,000 feet would crash 1/20th of the way up the first foundation. The land mass equals 2,250,000 square miles. The total mass of the city is 3,375,000,000 cubic miles.

The outside walls have 12 foundations. From the bottom to the top they are made of 12 stones (21:19-20):

- Jasper - purple, blue green, brass, or clear
- Sapphire - blue, red, violet, yellow, green, or white
- Chalcedony - misty gray, clouded with blue, yellow or purple
- Emerald - green
- Sardonyx - red color of carnelian, white of the onyx
- Sardius - flesh color
- Chrysolite - gold
- Beryl - pale green
- Topaz - greenish yellow
- Chrysoprasus - green and gold
- Jacinth - dark blue verging on black
- Amethyst - violet and purple

The twelve gates are made of pearl. The street of the city and the city itself are pure gold, like transparent glass (21:18, 21). That is a lot of gold!

- The city has no temple. God and the Lamb are the Temple of it (21:22).
- There will be nations and kingdoms on the new earth. We will serve God there forever. All people are saved (21:24). This is the last time the word "saved" appears in the Bible. It refers to those rescued from the destruction. The saved bring their glory and honor (that which is most valued) into the city (21:26). The saved are further described as "they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (21:27).
- Nothing defiling, disgusting, or deceitful will ever enter the city (21:27).
- Although there is no temple, there is still a throne (22:1). It is for the Father and the Son. We will not become deities in the future as cults teach. There is only one throne and it is for God!
- From the throne flows a pure river of water, clear as crystal. There is also a fountain with the water of life (21:6).
- The Tree of Life is in the New City. It appears as an amazingly large tree that grows out of both sides of the river and the middle of the street. It has 12 different fruits, and bears fruit every month. The fruit is for the food and the leaves are for the healing (Greek: therapeia) of the nations (22:2).
- There will be no curse there (22:3). The word curse means "to invoke an evil on someone". That well never happen again, because God is on His throne and we will all serve Him.
- We shall see God's face (22:4)! Contrast this statement with Exodus 33:20.

Jacob and Manoah claimed to have seen God (Genesis 32:30; Judges 13:22). God probably appeared to them as an angel or a Christophany (an Old Testament appearing of Jesus Christ). John 1:18 and 1 John 4:12 say no one has seen the face of God the Father. Jesus was the manifestation of Father on earth, but not in His glory (John 14:9; Isaiah 9:6). This will be common to all the saved one day!

- God's name will be in our foreheads, denoting ownership.
- There will be no need of the sun or candles there because the Lord and His brilliance will be the light. There will be no night (22:5).

The seven "no's" in review:

No sea, 21:1

No sorrow, 21:4

No crying, 21:4

No pain, 21:4

No death, 21:4

No curse, 22:3

No night, 22:5

- God's servants will reign forever and ever (22:5). It will also be a place of reward (22:12). This will be according to our work for Jesus Christ. Other Scriptures to study in regards to rewards: Psalm 62:12; Jeremiah 17:10; Matthew 16:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 15:40-42a; Daniel 12:3.
- Those who are obedient will have access to the Tree of Life, and may enter the gates of the New Jerusalem (22:14). Obedience is of utmost importance in our eternal standing. In the New Jerusalem, there will be limitations on those who were disobedient on earth. We will not all be equal. This is implied in Matthew 5:19; 19:29,30; 1 Corinthians 15:40-42a. Salvation and inheritance are two different things. Salvation can't be lost, but inheritance can (2 John 8, Nehemiah 13:14; Colossians 2:18).

There may be limited or no access to the Holy City for some believers who did not live for God. They may just be on the New Earth looking at the city (22:18, 19). This would include those who add to or take away from the Bible. The word "part" in 22:19 means "to get as a section or allotment, a division or share, a lot." "Out of" means "a separation of part from the whole."

It seems there will be more written in the book of life than just names. Psalm 56:8 implies our burdens are recorded there as well. Also see Malachi 3:16, 17.

When someone tampers with the Word of God on earth, they forfeit rewards and access to the Holy City in the New Heaven. This is the last warning and insight we have into the New Heaven.

Heaven is a wonderful place! This booklet just scratches the surface of this doctrine. I hope you have prepared to go there.

Pure waters of life there are flowing,
And all who will drink may be free.
Rare jewels of splendor are glowing –
How beautiful Heaven must be.

How beautiful Heaven must be –
Sweet home of the happy and free,
Fair haven of rest for the weary,
How beautiful Heaven must be.

Mrs. A.S. Bridgewater

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